



FIRST THINGS FIRST

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Arizona Early Child Development and Health Board Navajo Nation Regional Partnership Council MINUTES

Welcome and Roll Call of Regional Council

A Regular Meeting of the FTF Navajo Nation Regional Partnership Council was held on February 10, 2015 at 10:00 a.m. The meeting was located at the Navajo Nation Museum, Conference Room #2, Loop Road and Highway 264, Window Rock, Arizona 86515.

The meeting was called to order by Vice Chair Boyne at approximately 10:08 a.m. followed by roll call of the Regional Council.

Members Present: Benjamin Barney, Victoria Begay, Amelia Black, Grace Boyne, Rhonda Etsitty, and Valonia Hardy

Members Absent: Harry Martin, Paula Seanez, and Dawn Yazzie

FTF Staff Present: Melissa Begay, Elyse Dempsey, Candida Hunter, Maria Soto, Christine Stein and Virginia Turner

Welcome to New Regional Council Member Patricia Gonnle

Newly appointed Regional Council Member Patricia Gonnle expressed gratitude to begin serving on the Regional Council and provided a brief introduction.

Call to the Public

Sharon Brady, Program Manager of Reach Out and Read Arizona, and Vikki Shirley, Regional Coordinator of Reach Out and Read Arizona, provided a program update highlighting the recruitment of five sites – Saint Michaels Clinic, Sanders Nahata Dził Clinic, Northern Apache County Special Health Care District, Tsailie Clinic, and Sage Memorial Hospital; and further stated that eight sites are currently enrolled in the program within the region. Mrs. Shirley also reported the number of books donated and distributed. Ms. Brady announced that Reach Out and Read Arizona was recently awarded a grant from Save the Children, which will benefit the eight Reach Out and Read sites as well as two Save the Children sites to enhance the capacity of rural communities to better educate and promote the well-being of children. Ms. Brady noted that funding will allow an increase in current staff hours and purchasing books for all eight Reach Out and Read Arizona sites in the region. Reach Out and Read Arizona has also enlisted assistance from Dr. William Flood to serve as Medical Director for Reach Out and Read, and conduct two parent/child group trainings a year at the Chinle and Ganado elementary schools. In closing, Ms. Brady expressed gratitude to the Regional Council for consideration and continued support of Reach Out and Read Arizona program on Navajo Nation, Arizona.

Discussion and Possible Approval of January 13, 2015 Regular Meeting Minutes

A motion was made by Member Barney that the Navajo Nation Regional Partnership Council approve the January 13, 2015 Regular Meeting minutes as presented, seconded by Member Black. Motion carried.

Presentation and Review of Regional Governance Document – First Read

Regional Director Begay reviewed the original and updated versions of the Regional Governance Document noting major changes to sections of Conflicts of Interest, Lobbying & Campaigning, and Attendance; and the addition of section 1-112: Code of Conduct. The final draft will be presented to the Regional Council at the March 2015 Regular Meeting for review and action.

Member Etsitty inquired about access to meeting minutes upon conclusion of meeting. Regional Director Begay indicated that minutes are given signature approval at the next Regular Meeting, and posted on-line thereafter.

Member Barney queried about inclusion of governing policy surrounding use of Navajo and English languages during discussion by the Regional Council; and Navajo-based discussion and voting practices.

Member Black requested clarification for the current relationship between the Navajo Nation and First Things First; specifically in regards to lobbying on Navajo Nation.

Update, Discussion, and Possible Action of the STAR Pre-School's enrollment into Quality First

Regional Director Begay reviewed action made by the Regional Council at the December 2014 Regular Meeting to enroll and fund the STAR School under the region's Quality First strategy. As the STAR School is located within the FTF Coconino region, Regional Director Begay reminded the Regional Council that enrollment of the school by Coconino Regional Partnership Council was not possible at the time due to lack of vacant slots within Quality First. The Coconino Regional Partnership Council has since reevaluated and reassessed their Quality First program funding and identified two vacant slots that would allow enrollment of the STAR School, which would cause the Navajo Nation Regional Council to rescind enrollment and funding for the STAR School in Quality First.

Member Barney recalled a timeline concern where the STAR School could not be enrolled by the Coconino Regional Partnership Council until a later date. Virginia Turner, FTF Northeast Senior Regional Director, noted that the constraint for Coconino Regional Partnership Council was solely based on lack of funds for Quality First for schools on the enrollment waitlist, which has since been reassessed to allow for two additional slots for center enrollment. In addition, Ms. Turner also clarified that if the Navajo Nation Regional Partnership Council had begun funding Quality First scholarships for the STAR School, the Regional Council would have been obligated to fund the scholarships in perpetuity, or until the STAR School elected to exit Quality First. Instead the Coconino Regional Partnership Council will be funding scholarships for the STAR School. After which, the Navajo Nation Regional Partnership Council is also able to fund additional scholarships for the STAR School and other early care programs in the region if needed, which will not be in perpetuity. Member Barney also expressed concern about the STAR School being made aware of the recent change in enrollment. Ms. Turner noted that the action taken by the Coconino Regional Partnership Council was made on February 9; and that Dr. Sorensen will be informed of the change in enrollment by the Coconino Regional Partnership Council.

Member Etsitty asked if the STAR School would be enrolled as full participation and is aware that the Coconino Regional Partnership Council would not support scholarships for a two star rated program. Ms. Turner clarified that determination of star rating for the STAR School will not be completed until FY2016, and that scholarships would still not be available for the STAR School in the first year as a newly enrolled program.

Based on the new information provided, the Navajo Nation Regional Partnership Council understands that Coconino Regional Partnership Council has reassessed their Quality First funding to create additional center-based slots, which allows enrollment of the STAR Pre-School in their Quality First program.

Member Begay moved that the Navajo Nation Regional Partnership Council approve to rescind the approval made on December 9, 2014 to fund the enrollment of STAR School into the Navajo Nation's Quality First program, seconded by Member Hardy. Motion carried.

Review and Possible Action on the Final Draft of the Native Language Preservation Assessment Scope of Work

Regional Director Begay and Christine Stein, FTF Director of Program Research and Evaluation, reported collective feedback from Regional Council members on the Native Language Preservation Assessment Scope of Work. Initial reports from Regional Council members asked that Navajo language evaluation include more than writing and reading components; literacy not be solely defined by speaking and understanding the Navajo language, but also knowledge of imbedded tribal knowledge; and that evaluation be made for the use of Navajo language within early learning programs. In addition, Ms. Stein also noted that consideration is being made to incorporate additional interviews of parents, family members and community members who are speaking Navajo language at home or school, and the Navajo values conveyed in teaching Navajo language. Ms. Stein reported that discussion was had with Ellen Majure, Regional Director for the FTF Coconino Regional Partnership Council, who had previously conducted a similar assessment for the Hopi language.

Regional Director Begay expressed appreciate to the Regional Council for their feedback, and further specified that new components added to the scope of work based on discussion with Regional Council Members including interviews with directors and managers of early childhood learning programs to gage an accurate perspective of the region, classroom observations to gage successful teaching implementation, and an environmental scan using literature review. The Regional Council also requested consideration for a vendor from the region or with considerable familiarity with the region and Navajo Language be considered to complete the assessment; and that the diversity of the Navajo Nation Arizona is embodied in the final assessment.

Member Barney recommended a focused assessment of early learning programs for children birth to age 5, and attempt to duplicate implementation strategies. Mr. Barney also commented that choice to speak Navajo language varies among families, and that interviews of families teaching the language should be conducted.

Member Hardy expressed interest in outcomes, and recommended conducting an environmental scan of all schools currently implementing Navajo language curriculum to determine successful strategies.

Vice Chair Boyne expressed concern for the continuity of speaking Navajo language after young children are immersed in school or public arenas where the Navajo language is not spoken.

Member Etsitty commented that the intent of the Native Language Preservation Strategy is to identify methods for language preservation, and that the Regional Council should address how to narrow the scope and identify communities where children do not have access to the Navajo language.

Regional Director Begay indicated that the original scope of work could expand, which would require additional time and funding. Regional Director Begay asked the Regional Council for feedback regarding potential barriers considering the political context surrounding the Navajo language, if any, when presenting the intent of the Native Language Preservation Strategy throughout the region at local meetings.

Vice Chair Boyne recommended that FTF consider the response from audience at chapter meetings, and to have a community member accompany FTF at presentations.

Member Barney noted a difference in generational opinions in terms of the validity of Navajo language in the region.

Member Black asked that the Regional Council first identify a concise intent to ensure consistent messaging throughout presentations, and to be aware of English-to-Navajo translation as messaging may change.

Regional Director Begay thanked the Regional Council for their feedback, and noted that next steps are to finalize the scope of work in regards implementation, cost, timeframe, and process, which will eventually be provided to the vendor. Regional Director recommended that the Regional Council consider forming a subcommittee for the Native Language Preservation Strategy.

The Regional Council agreed that formation of a subcommittee would be beneficial. Vice Chair Boyne asked that Regional Council members consider serving on the subcommittee and provide confirmation to Regional Director Begay.

Virginia Turner, Senior Regional Director, recommended that consideration be made of the current political climate of Navajo Language on Navajo Nation as it relates to the most recent Navajo election.

Regional Director's Report

a. Early Childhood Forum – February 18, 2015

Regional Director Begay announced that the second Early Childhood Forum will take place at the Navajo Nation Museum, Window Rock, Arizona 86515 on February 18, 2015 at 8:30 a.m.; and invited the Regional Council to attend and participate. Regional Director noted that the forum will continue the work of the Regional Council as the unfunded approach for system building. Notice of the forum was released with intentions to dialogue with all members of the public including early learning professionals.

b. DRAFT 2015 Business Calendar

Regional Director Begay presented a draft of the 2015 Business Calendar with featured monthly agenda items, noting that additional items may be added to meeting agendas as needed. The calendar also included a timeline for strategy updates including RFGA and government-to-government and tribal agreements; and information for statewide FTF meetings and regional events. Regional Director Begay noted that the calendar will be updated as needed.

Future Agenda Items and Announcements

Member Barney announced attendance at the Faith-Based Representative Forum on February 4, 2015, where a history of faith-based in state agencies was provided.

Member Etsitty announced that the Association for Supportive Child Care will host the 24th Annual Celebrate the Young Child Conference on March 7, 2015 in Glendale, Arizona.

Member Hardy announced availability for volunteer or other projects due to a recent change in employment.

Vice Chair Boyne announced that the next Regular Meeting is scheduled for March 10, 2015 at 10:00 a.m. DST in Leupp, Arizona. Lodging request can be sent to Regional Director Begay or Elyse Dempsey.


Adjournment

A motion was made by Member Etsitty to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Member Begay. Motion carried. Vice Chair Boyne adjourned the meeting at approximately 12:00 p.m.

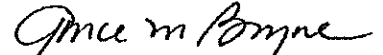
Dated this 10th day of February, 2015

ARIZONA EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT & HEALTH BOARD

Navajo Nation Regional Partnership Council



Elyse V. Dempsey, Administrative Assistant II



Grace Boyne, Vice Chair